General Assembly

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Agenda item 56 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/62/421/Add.2)*]

62/200. International Year of Astronomy, 2009

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 61/185 of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years,

Aware that astronomy is one of the oldest basic sciences and that it has contributed and still contributes fundamentally to the evolution of other sciences and applications in a wide range of fields,

Recognizing that astronomical observations have profound implications for the development of science, philosophy, culture and the general conception of the universe,

Noting that, although there is a general interest in astronomy, it is often difficult for the general public to gain access to information and knowledge on the subject,

Conscious that each society has developed legends, myths and traditions concerning the sky, the planets and the stars which form part of its cultural heritage,

Welcoming resolution 33 C/25 adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 19 October 2005[1] to express its support for the declaration of 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy, with a view to highlighting the importance of astronomical sciences and their contribution to knowledge and development,

Noting that the International Astronomical Union has been supporting the initiative since 2003 and that it will act to grant the project the widest impact,

Convinced that the Year could play a crucial role, inter alia, in raising public awareness of the importance of astronomy and basic sciences for sustainable development, promoting access to the universal knowledge of fundamental science through the excitement generated by the subject of astronomy, supporting formal and informal science education in schools as well as through science centres and

[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, 33rd session, Paris, 3-21 October 2005*, vol. 1: *Resolutions*, chap. V.

museums and other relevant means, stimulating a long-term increase in student enrolment in the fields of science and technology, and supporting scientific literacy,

1. *Decides* to declare 2009 the International Year of Astronomy;

2. *Designates* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as the lead agency and focal point for the Year, and invites it to organize, in this capacity, activities to be realized during the Year, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, the International Astronomical Union, the European Southern Observatory and astronomical societies and groups throughout the world, and, in this regard, notes that the activities of the Year will be funded from voluntary contributions, including from the private sector;

3. *Encourages* all Member States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to promote actions at all levels aimed at increasing awareness among the public of the importance of astronomical sciences and promoting widespread access to new knowledge and experiences of astronomical observation.

78th plenary meeting
19 December 2007